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The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, *May* 1. 1694.

Quest. 1. *Whether a Number actually infinite be not a plain Contradiction?*

Answ. Quantity is infinitely divisiable, therefore the variety of expressing the parts of Matter is infinite, or there is an infinite Number of Numeral Terms, tho' to say any one Number whatever is Infinite, is false, since it may be doubled, tripled, *&c.*

Quest. 2. *Whether Infinite Numbers are equal?*

Answ. This depends upon the former Question, and has its Answer in the last.

Quest. 3. *Whether a Rich Covetous Man can be honest?*

Answ. No, for tho' perhaps he may not immediately cheat such as he deals with, yet he Cheats the Poor of their Charity due, he defrauds himself of sometimes Necessaries, at least of his Reputation and Soul, and robs his God of that Worship that is due to him, in transferring it on Money, and thereby becoming an Idolater.

Quest. 4. My Brother and my self were *French-men* born, and in our youthful days we travel'd many years among the Indians in the *West-Indies*, in which time we became perfect Masters of their Trade and Language: We also discovered divers Ports where no *Europeans* had ever traded, and we resolved to go to the Court of *France* to inform it of our Discoveries, presuming that the Most Christian King would send some of his Subjects under our Conduct to settle some Factories in those convenient Ports aforesaid. But passing through an *English* Factory in our way homeward, the Governour of the said Factory for King *Charles* the second, understanding we might be very serviceable to his Master, prevailed upon us (by large Promises) to quit our Design for *France*, and sent us hither in an *English* Vessel, and gave us large recommendatory Letters to divers Lords of the Privy Council, who carried us to the King, who received us very graciously, and hereupon there was a Company incorporated, who sent us with two *English* Vessels upon the Discoveries aforesaid. We faithfully effected what we undertook, settled divers *English* Factories, and at our return King *Charles* gave each of us a Gold Chain and Meddal, and the Company promised each of us 100 *l. per Ann.* which Salaries they paid us three or four Years, 'till the Companies Servants had learned the Language of the Natives, the Method of Trade and way of Navigation thither; which they had no sooner learned, but they stopt our Salaries, dismissed us their Service, and sent us home to *France*; where we no sooner arrived, but reflecting upon the severe usage of the said Company, in discharging us of their Service without any Provocation, or Neglect in us, we meditated Revenge, and immediately combined with some of our Countrey-men, with whom we sailed for *America*, and with the assistance of our old Acquaintance the *Indians*, we made our selves Masters of the chiefest of the Companies Factories. My Brother dyed in this Expedition, but I left the *French* in possession, and returned immediately to the Court at *Paris*, to give an Account of what I had done. The Company at *London* no sooner heard of the loss of their Factory, and the great Dammage they sustained thereby, but they employed one of their Company to write insinuating Letters to me, (then at *Paris*) acknowledging the Companies former Unkindness (if I may not say Injustice) to me and my Brother, with large Protestations, that if I would again restore the said Factory which I had taken from them, they would make me ample satisfaction for their former Unkindness, and would agree to any Terms I should propose for my Advantage and well being, and future Settlement in *England*. I (having married the Daughter of a Person of Quality in *England*, and having a great Kindness for the Nation) did without Hesitation go for *London*, where I was kindly received by King *Charles* the second, and the Duke of *York* who was then Governour of the said Company, who both directed I should be made a Free Denison of *England*, and that the Company should largely reward me, if I did perform my Promise, and restore the said Factory, pursuant to my Engagement. Before I went, they settled on me two Actions (for my Life) in the Companies Joint-stock, and 50 *l. per Ann.* subsistance Money, with many large Promises of future Gratuities and Rewards after I should have restored the said Factory. I then went immediately with the said Companies Ships, and delivered the said Factory to a Governour, whom the said Company had appointed to receive the same, and within six Months I brought all the *French* which I left in Possession of the said Factory to the Company at *London*, together with Goods to the Value of 7000 *l.* (and so much the Company sold them for) of which a fourth part was my own. All the Compensation I had at my Return, from their large Protestations, was an hundred Guinea's and 50 *l. per Ann.* added to my former fifty Subsistance; with Proviso, that when the King should bestow on me a place of greater Value than 50 *l. per Ann.* then the last fifty should cease and determine: But King *Charles* gave me no Place, and yet they have taken from me the last 50 *l.* three Years since, and never gave me a Penny for my said fourth part of the 7000 *l.* aforesaid, so that I have now but 50 *l. per Ann.* Subsistance-mony to maintain my Wife and five Children, notwithstanding the Product of the said Factory, which I so frankly gave the said Company, hath since yielded them Goods to the Value of near two Hundred thousand Pounds.

Gentlemen, *The Cryes of poor Infants for Necessaries, and in particular for Bread, hath sometimes emboldened me to beg Favour of some of the Committee, to continue at least what was given me by an Order entered in their own Books: To which submissive Request, all the Comfortable Answer I could get, was, that they were Masters of their own Orders; and as a Parliament can repeal Acts made by former Parliaments, so can a Committee reverse Orders made by former Committees, to which they Command me to submit. I have borrowed all the Mony I can of Compassionate Christians, and have run on score with all People as far as I can get Credit, and I protest I expect every day to be cast into a Gaol for Debts which I could not avoid. If I flye into* France, *I fear I shall be destroyed in that Arbitrary Government for serving any Prince but my own: I have no Money to go to Law, nor dare I Contend with my Masters, nor (if I durst) do I know if any Action will lye against them.* Gentlemen, *I find in all your Writings you are great Friends to the distressed, and I assure you you cannot meet with a fitter Object of Compassion than my self: I am resolved to follow your Counsel, and therefore do most passionately desire you to Advise me what course you your selves would take if you were in the same Circumstences (which God forbid) with your poor Petitioning Stranger?*

Answ. All People allow that Parliaments may Repeal Acts made by former Parliaments, when they find any unforeseen Mischief arise from them, and they do frequently Repeal the same: But we utterly deny that any subsequent Committee can take away any Gratuity or Reward given by any precedent Committee, for Services already performed (which seems to be your Case) or hereafter to be performed,

formed, provided you keep the Articles on your part to be done and performed, any more than Children can turn Persons out of Houses or Estates, of which their Parents have made Deeds of Gift before. We are of Opinion that the Company made an extraordinary good Purchase, when two Original Actions, and 100 *l. per Ann.* for your Life, procured them the Possession of a Factory that hath already yielded them two Hundred Thousand Pound in Commodities, besides what it may yet yield them *in futuro:* We must therefore beg leave to believe you are mistaken, or give us leave not to Credit your Averment, that they have taken away half your hundred *per Ann.* unless you had first retaken from them half the said Factory. It seemeth also to us fully as incredible as the former, that they should deny you a fourth part of the 7000 *l.* you Traded with, whilst the said Factory was in your own Possession, since we cannot imagine what Claim the Company could make to any part thereof: Surely if that King were living who gave you the Gold Chain and Medal for your Services, you would not have needed to make so dismal a Complaint. And, *Sir*, now we have as Gratious a King as ever sat upon the Throne, and as ready to relieve the Oppressed, and since you desire us to tell you what we would do were your Case our own, which (as you say) God forbid; We would Petition his Majesty in Council, or in his Absence, the Queen, who is also full of Compassion, and will account it her Glory to relieve the distressed. As to the Goods which your self traded, and the Company sold for 7000 *l.* if you made the Company no Grant or Deed of Gift of them, you have doubtless a good Cause of Action either at Law or Equity for the same; you since you deliver'd 'em upon such Conditions as are now made void, therefore also your right becomes to be re-invested in the whole. And whereas you plead Poverty, and cannot go to Law with your Powerful and Rich Masters, that is like an Objection made by a Stranger indeed, for our Laws have so great a regard for the Poor, that they may be admitted to Sue *in Forma Pauperis*, and have their Cause tryed *Gratis*. Besides, a Wife and Children are nearer than Masters or any other Relations; and if that little you have depends on your own Life, it must needs prove a great Mortification to you to leave so many Beggars, ont of a Compliment to your Masters, who if your own relation be true, are but so many Step-masters at best, from whom God send you a good Deliverance

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